

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7 are pending in the present application, claim 8 has been cancelled by the present response.

Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first and second paragraphs for the reasons noted on page 3, paragraph 5 to page 5, paragraph 13 of the Office Action.

Claim 1 has accordingly been amended to more clearly define the subject matter of the invention, and to overcome the rejection. More specifically, claim 1 has been amended to define that only the e-mail address is not accessible to anyone other than processing laboratory personnel, in reference to the description on page 2, lines 5-7 of the specification. Claim 1 has been further amended to define how access to the e-mail address is limited to the laboratory personnel: with a call center managed by the processing laboratory, in reference to the description on page 3, line 14 of the specification. Also, claim 1 has been amended to comply with paragraph 11 of the Office Action.

Therefore, pending claims 1-7 are believed to be in compliance with the requirements of 35 USC 112, first and second paragraphs.

Claims 1 and 3-7 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Settle FilmWorks in view of Lambert et al. (U.S. 6,363,478), further in view of Garfinkle et al. (U.S. 6,017,197). Claims 2 and 8 were rejected under 35U.S.C. 103(a), as being unpatentable over Seattle FilmWorks in view of Lambert et al. (US 6,363,478), in further view of Garfinkle et al. (US 6,017,157), in further view of Afifi et al.

As mentioned in the description, when a user wishes to process silver type images, he sends a support, such as an envelope, to a development laboratory (reference: page 2, lines 31-37; page 3, lines 23-25).

In this case a risk exists in that at least two envelopes, from two different users, can be identified with the same number, for example in different countries (reference: page 3, lines 26-28). In consequence, the objective problem of the invention is how to differentiate images identified with the same code 200, for example, the envelope number. This problem can be managed by the

laboratory at the receiving step 10, when the user calls the call center managed by the laboratory (reference: page 3, lines 12-14). After 10, the processing laboratory, at 20, recovers, via the call center, a number 300 uniquely identifying the terminal used by the user at the opening step.

In the particular case where two users (for ex. user 1 and user 2) have been given the same code number 200 identifying their respective images, in order to be able to associate the code identifying images with the right number identifying the right terminal (i.e. user 1's terminal number or user 2's terminal number), it is necessary to have two different code numbers 200, to allow the association of the right code with the right terminal, for example with the telephone number.

In this particular case, a preferred solution (reference: page 4, line 1) is to identify additional data to the code 200, at 10 (i.e. before the association at 20)(the place where the telephone call is coming from). If not, the laboratory, at 20, will not be able to know what telephone number 300 (user 1's terminal number or user 2's terminal number?) to associate with what code number 200 (if no additional datum is provided).

Therefore, in this particular case, the additional information "the place where the telephone call is coming from" is not redundant with the corresponding telephone number, because the unique telephone number 300 (corresponding either to user 1 or to user 2) cannot be rightly allocated to its corresponding code, if a differentiation has not been made previously (at 10) between two identical code numbers 200 (provided by different users).

None of the cited prior art documents, whether considered individually or in combination, disclose the association of a code identifying an image with a number identifying a terminal, and with a place where a telephone call is coming from; in consequence, amended claim 1 is believed to be allowable.

Further, none of the cited prior art documents, whether considered individually or in combination, disclose or suggest the problem cited above of the present invention. In consequence, a person skilled in the art, knowing this problem, would not have found in the cited prior art documents the solution of amended claim 1. Thus, Applicants consider that the present invention solves a

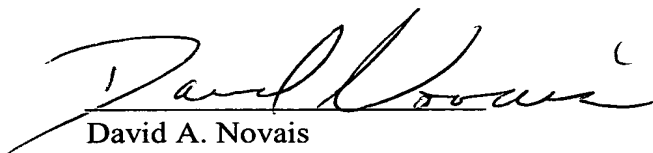
previously unrecognized problem, and is unobvious, with respect to the cited prior art documents.

In conclusion, amended claim 1 is considered allowable over the applied prior art documents.

Claims 2-7 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1 and set forth further unique features of the inventor which are not shown or suggested in the applied documents. Therefore, these claims are also allowable.

In view of the foregoing comments, the inventions defined by each of claims 1-7 are patentable, and a favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested. If any issues remain that require consideration, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney to discuss these issues.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David Novais", written over a horizontal line.

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